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FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9563
INFO RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE
RUEHGG/UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 2327
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 5781
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 9385
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C O N F I D E N T I A L RANGOON 000718

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EAP/MLS, DRL, AND IO
PACOM FOR FPA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/28/2019

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [BM](#)

SUBJECT: BURMA: SEVERAL JOURNALISTS, ACTIVISTS ARRESTED;
WHEREABOUTS UNKNOWN

Classified By: Political Officer Marc Shaw for Reasons 1.4 (b) & (d)

11. (SBU) Embassy sources have confirmed media reports that authorities in Rangoon arrested seven members of Lin Let Kye (Burmese for &shining star8)) a group of approximately 40 young social activists and Rangoon-based journalists that was formed in May 2008 to assist in the Cyclone Nargis relief effort. The two most prominent, arrested on October 27, were Thant Zin Soe -- editor of Foreign Affairs Weekly (a sister publication of The Voice) -- and freelance journalist Paing Soe Oo. According to media reports, authorities also detained Ka Gyi, Zaw Gyi, Lai Ron, Shwe Moe, and Aung Myat Thu on October 26. The whereabouts of the seven are unknown.

12. (C) Our sources do not know why authorities targeted Lin Let Kye members, but suspect it was because of an alleged connection to exile border groups. Thant Zin Soe's colleague told us the government remains suspicious of activists and journalists believed to be working with exile groups, especially if money crosses the border. In this case, our sources believe, but cannot be certain, that hundi system (an informal money transfer system) informants may have tipped-off the government to the activities of Lin Let Kye group members. Comment: If so, that would be a particularly troubling development for activists who frequently rely on the informal hundi system to receive funding from abroad.
DINGER